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CREATION SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES SOCIETY

The Creation Social Science and Humanities Society (CSSHS) was incorporated in Wichita, Kansas, in 1977. The CSSHS is educational, and will promote and disseminate information on the implications of the Biblical creation model of origins for the social sciences and humanities, with emphasis on the development of these disciplines in accordance with the rapidly emerging and increasingly well-established natural scientific models of Biblical creation.

The **Quarterly Journal** is directed toward teachers and students of the social sciences and humanities, especially in institutions of higher learning. The CSSHS may also publish books, monographs, and other writings, and sponsor speakers, seminars, and research projects related to its educational purpose.

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DEVOTIONAL

John Mackay

"And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life. And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh as God had commanded him: and the Lord shut him in."

Genesis 7:15,16

God provided only one door into the Ark. Noah and his family went through it and when they were on board the Scripture says, "God shut him in." The fate of all those outside was sealed for the God who shut the door is the God who shuts and no man can open; the God who opens a door that no man can shut (Revelation 3: 7, 8). But just as the fate of the people outside the Ark was sealed, so Noah could rest in the security of knowing that the door which locked the unbelievers out, was the door which kept the believers in. Noah was locked in. He couldn't get out! God kept him that way, so Noah would be saved through the Flood and delivered safely into the new earth.

There was no rudder on the Ark, no man-made engine, no sails. Noah couldn't control the Ark once he was in it. God gave Noah the design for the Ark, deliberately making it impossible for Noah to steer it his way. The Ark ended up on Ararat not because of chance winds, but because God controlled Noah's salvation—Noah just had to follow God's plan to build the Ark.

Our relationship with the Lord Jesus is the same. He is the only door we can be saved through. He promises that no man can take us out of His hand (John 10:29), yet, like Noah, we are commanded to work out our salvation (Philippians 2:12), giving everything over to our Father's hands, following His will to be delivered safely into the new heaven and the new earth (Rev. 21 & 22).

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

ENCOURAGING NEWS FROM POLAND

For persons who know that Prof. Dr. Maciej Giertych of Kornik, Poland translated *The Crumbling Theory of Evolution* (by the late Wallace Johnson) into Polish and had it published in 1989, and that Giertych himself converted from Evolutionism to Creationism some years ago, you will take interest and pleasure in the following excerpt from his 03/91 letter to me:

Tomorrow I shall be speaking for the first time to a gathering of high school teachers of biology in one region of Poland, on the invitation of the official education authorities.

I consider this a great success because generally the establishment is against me and most of my invitations come from students groups or youth clubs.

Next month I shall have another of these educational meetings with biology teachers in a different region. So the message is spreading. Johnson's book really initiated interest.

We all need encouragement from time to time in this long range struggle to let the truth be known about Origins scientific evidences. Giertych's successes in Poland are but a part of an overall breakthrough in Eastern Europe. You probably know there have been similar successes in such other countries as Romania and Russia. Giertych became an ally well before the current window was opened and is a tireless worker with the most meager resources imaginable.

Let us pray for his continued successes. Let us also join in prayer for safety and well being of his family.

Paul Ellwanger
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PRISON INMATES REHABILITATION AND THE GOSPEL

Charles W. Colson, president of Prison Fellowship, writes in a recent letter to supporters:

According to a just-released report by a leading criminal justice research organization, *America now leads the world in the percentage of our population that's behind bars.*

It should be no surprise since our prison population has *doubled* since 1980.

CSSH Quarterly
Vol. XIII, No. 4 (Summer 1991)

After reading the report of these discouraging figures, Rep. John Conyers, who chairs the House Government Operations Committee, said: "We've got to stop jailing and start rehabilitating . . ."

Bur scores of prison authorities have admitted to me personally that conventional prison efforts to rehabilitate inmates don't work — *and they know it.*

I now have in my hands a study be noted sociologists that clearly shows, by scientific and objective means, that the Gospel message *does indeed have a significant, positive effect on the rehabilitation of prison inmates.*

Over a 10-year period, federal prisoners who'd taken part in Prison Fellowship Seminars were compared against a matched inmate "control" group . . .

The Prison Fellowship inmates showed a significantly lower re-arrest rate (many, of course, *never* returned to prison after their release) . . . and a longer crime-free period after release.

Even Christian-influenced inmates who did return to prison committed less serious crimes — while the control group committed worse crimes than before.

Editor's Note: Reprinted from letter of March 29, 1991 from Prison Fellowship, P.O. Box 17500, Washington, D.C. 20041. We have asked for Mr. Colson's help in obtaining a complete copy of the sociologists' study so we may report on it in the CSSH Quarterly.

HUMAN CREATIVITY: EVOLUTION OR BIBLICAL CREATION?

Paul D. Ackerman

We make, but thou art the creating core.
Whatever thing I dream, invent, or feel,
Thou art the heart of it, the atmosphere.

George MacDonald

In spite of great diversity all theories in psychology are founded on or at least accept Darwinian evolution. The evolutionist framework gives all psychological theories a common feature when it comes to explaining the origin and development of human psychological capabilities. The common feature is an insistence that complex functions develop from chance arrangements of relatively more simple ones. B. F. Skinner has stated the general applicability of the Darwin framework as a basic tenet of current scientific theorizing in all fields succinctly,

It is characteristic of the evolution of a species, as it is of the acquisition of behavior and of the evolution of a culture, that ineffective forms give rise to effective.¹

This "simple begets complex" scheme is the defining principle of evolution which views the vast cosmic array as having originated from an explosion and subsequent collisions of hydrogen atoms 15 to 20 billion years ago. The colliding hydrogen atoms were jolted into more complex atoms which in turn collided to produce still more complex arrangements of matter until there were stars, galaxies, and planets. On at least one planet, random collisions between relatively simple elements continued to produce more complex forms until life appeared. Simple life systems evolved into more complex ones through internal random fluctuations selected for by environmental suitability ("survival of the fittest") until intelligent life appeared. On planet earth, man is the current pinnacle of this process, at least in terms of intelligence and creativity.

Within psychology, all theoretical explanations respect this simple-to-complex framework. For example, theories of language origin in mankind start with the grunts, squeaks, and howls of relatively simple animal communication.² Evolutionists theorize that later, after humans discovered fire and therefore sat around looking at each other face to face each night with nothing else to do, the primitive communication system of grunts and gestures evolved upward to the complex language of the present day.³ Such speculation is contrary to the scientific and historical evidence.⁴ Observa-

tions of animal communication reveal no spontaneous tendency to evolve upward; the earliest known languages and languages of so-called primitive people today are, if anything, more complex than their modern or civilized human counterparts;⁵ and studies of languages over time reveal that they tend to simplify rather than become more complex. "The evolution of language, at least within the historical period, is a story of progressive simplification."⁶

In a similar mode of simple to complex evolution, the origin of human problem solving, intelligence, and creativity is theorized to have started with simple reflexes and instinctual responses to specific stimuli. Over millions of years our ancestors somehow evolved the ability to inhibit or delay these automatic responses in the presence of their eliciting stimuli allowing for greater response diversity. This ability to postpone responses combined with increase memory storage and ability for generalizing and abstracting were the key evolutionary stepping stones in the origin of human intelligence and creativity.⁷

An excellent illustration of how human creativity is handled in an evolutionist framework is Ellen Dissanayake's, *What Is Art For?*. Of course, art must be explained in terms of biological usefulness. It must result from some activity that incurred a reproductive advantage on our primitive ancestors. Dissanayake points out that "some theorists... propose that human skill and creativity were originally developed through using and shaping objects to serve as weapons and implements".⁸ Another possibility is that art has developed as a mechanism for coping with boredom. With increased intelligence and understanding there comes a point on the scale of life where the experience of boredom appears. Successfully coping with it through safe symbolic manipulation (art) might incur biological survival value on the species.⁹ Recognizing the merit of these hypotheses, Dissanayake adds her explanation for art—"making special". "The beginning of art as a behavior can be said to lie in the tendency to make special or recognize specialness."¹⁰ Dissanayake presumes that the tendency to make special would be an inherited predisposition, selected for according to Darwinian principles under which societies and individuals possessing the trait of "making things special" would survive better than those not possessing such a trait.

We can next consider how the behavior of "making special" might have arisen and what its selective advantage could have been. Evolutionists have puzzled over the selective value of the extravagant songs of birds, which would seem to be far more elaborate than necessary for simple transmission of information about species, sex, breeding condition, and so forth. Countless species convey these data in much simpler and equally effective ways. ...

Birds who sing longer or more elaborately than others could be super-advertising their territorial proprietorship, ... insistently demonstrating their vitality and intense interest in what they are communicating. ...

In a similar manner, making special (as, say, embellishing, repeating, or performing a particular act with virtuosity)

might well have originated as a demonstration of the wish or need to persuade others (and oneself) of the efficacy or desirability of what was being done. Taking pains is a way of being more certain to achieve one's intention. ...

The fact of one's taking pains convinces others and oneself that the activity is worth doing: it is reinforcing. When allied to life-serving activities—tool manufacture, weaponry, ceremony—elaboration (as reinforcement) would enhance survivorship.¹¹

In other words, "making special" shows others and yourself that you mean business, have a lot of vigor and energy, and are worth mating with.

When it comes to the evolutionist understanding of human creativity in its current evolved state, one can look to how modern psychologists handle the topic. A good example of a scientific view of art from within the evolutionist framework can be seen in B. F. Skinner's consideration of poetry.

A person produces a poem and a woman produces a baby, and we call the person a poet and the woman a mother. Both are essential as loci in which vestiges of the past come together in certain combinations.

... I have been using a poem simply as an example. I could have developed the same theme in art, music, fiction, scholarship, science, invention—in short, wherever we speak of original behavior.

... If I deserve any credit at all, (for the presentation) it is simply for having served as a place in which certain processes could take place. I shall interpret your polite applause in that light.¹²

In other words, Skinner is saying that it is not really proper to say that a poet wrote a poem, but rather one should say that the poem (or "poeming") happened at the particular time and space location of the poet. Before that, of course, the poet happened as a result of a field of blind natural forces. For Skinner, the poet simply represents the focal point of a time and space field-event particularly conducive to the occurrence of poems. In passing it should be noted that Skinner sees full well the link between his view of human creativity and the more fundamental issue of creation by God vs. evolution by chance.

For the second time in a little more than a century a theory of selection by consequences is threatening a traditional belief in a creative mind. And is it not rather strange that although we have abandoned that belief with respect to the creation of the world, we fight so desperately to preserve it with respect to the creation of a poem?¹³

Skinner is right, of course, but the knife cuts both ways: as it becomes increasingly apparent that the weight of scientific evidence renders all options ludicrous except "in the beginning God—with His creative mind—created the heavens and the earth," then the concept of a human creative mind gains credibility.

Most psychologists do not view the issue of human creativity as

starkly as Skinner, but on analysis their notions boil down to the same evolutionist stock. Carl Rogers, for example, says essentially the same thing as Skinner:

My definition, then, of the creative process is that it is the emergence in action of a novel relational product, growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the materials, events, people, or circumstances of his life on the other.¹⁴

Relative to Skinner, Rogers is quite vague in his perspective on human creativity. To distance himself from the barrenness of Skinner's materialism while staying loyal to the evolutionist framework, Rogers has no alternative except to take recourse to some mystical or occult force inherent in man.

The mainspring of creativity appears to be the same tendency which we discover so deeply as the curative force in psychotherapy—man's tendency to actualize himself, to become his potentialities. By this I mean the directional trend which is evident in all organic and human life—the urge to expand, extend, develop, mature—the tendency to express and activate all the capacities of the organism, to the extent that such activation enhances the organism or the self.¹⁵

If an evolutionist is not comfortable with Skinner's stark materialism or Rogers' mysticism, the only option left is "vapory nonsense" as Dissanayake has called it. An excellent example of vapory nonsense is Abraham Maslow's definition of human creativity:

And since self-actualization or health must ultimately be defined as the coming to pass of the fullest humanness, or as the "Being" of the person, it is as if SA creativity were almost synonymous with, or a *sine qua non* aspect of, or a defining characteristic of, essential humanness.¹⁶

Now, from a scientific viewpoint, what does that mean? What is "fullest humanness?" In terms of the Bible and the God of the Bible one can understand "fullest humanness," because in Christ and the biblical revelation there is an objective frame of reference to define it. But apart from Scripture's objective—and absolute—framework, we can only have subjective opinion. Deny the Creator and you either lose the meaning of human creativity to materialist reductionism or to vapory nonsense.

Whatever the failure of modern social scientists in denying the biblically defined foundations of human creativity, there is no repressing it in the scientific efforts of the field's many practitioners. After a consideration of the biblical framework of understanding creativity, we will look at an example of creative research pointing to the biblical view of man as intrinsically creative.

"In the beginning God" and "man created in the image and likeness of God" are pivotal truths, and essential, foundational doctrines for understanding human creativity. We are created in the image and likeness of God; the first and one of the most frequent things the Bible tells us about God is that He is the Creator; therefore, one aspect of our creation in God's likeness is creativity.

Man is created in the image of the creator God and therefore

takes joy in creativity and discovery about the world God has made. In order to be properly creative and correctly understand the discoveries God allows us to search out, we must remain faithful to his Word and commandments. If we are not faithful, we will not understand the world properly. To the extent social scientists ignore or deny God as Creator, they have problems with the concept of human creativity. As man is faithful to God, he uncovers mysteries that cause him to glory in the wonder of God's creation. Scientific work becomes not only productive and a blessing to man, but a form of worship as well.

God created us in His own image. He designed us in such a way that we can understand and enjoy the miracle of his creation. Interest in artistic expression, scientific discovery, and technological advance is central to our created identity. In God's image, we long to express ourselves, to know, and to understand. Consider the wonders of art and literature, and the performances of great actors, dancers, and musicians. One even finds creative genius in false philosophies and religions. Through science and technology, we seem to live in a world full of miracles. Man has created space ships, airplanes, artificial hearts, computers, air conditioners, light bulbs, and polio vaccine. The foundational Scripture for this creative productivity is Genesis 1:26-28 which reveals that man is created in the image of God and that God has commanded us to increase in number and to subdue and rule over the earth.

Scientific evidence in support of the biblical framework declaring creativity and joy of discovery as basic to our nature is found in the following, delightful experiments with little babies.¹⁷ Psychologists now routinely recognize that infants in the first days of life can learn to perform simple responses in order to receive rewards. T.G.R. Bower taught babies to turn their head in order to receive a peek-a-bow from an adult. Other studies have shown that infants will learn to turn their head to the left or the right to receive a sweet, turn on a projector to give them something to look at, or make a mobile turn. One psychologist took this research a step farther by presenting infants with puzzles to solve.¹⁸ The researcher wired a light to a switch-apparatus which infants could activate by turning their head to the right or left. The "puzzles" were defined by the direction or combination of head turns required to make the light come on. For example, infants might have to turn their head to the right to switch the light on. After they solved this puzzle and knew how to make the light come on whenever they wished, the rules would be changed so that only a left head-turn switched on the light. More and more complicated problems were presented until, for example, babies might have to learn that only a combination of two right head-turns followed by two left head-turns would switch on the light.

This research revealed that infants in the first months of life are not only able to solve puzzles like this, but they are intensely interested in and derive much pleasure from doing so. Once infants learn what combination of head-turns switch on a light, they show little interest in it and seldom make the head moves necessary to switch it on. It seems that the joy lies not in seeing the light but in the

search for the solution to the mystery of how to control it. When the researcher changes the combination of head-turns required to switch on the light, the infant will discover this fact when they try the former solution and discover that it no longer works. When this happens there is a sudden burst of activity by the baby until he finds the new combination. At the moment of discovery when infants learn the new solution, they smile.

In the process of detecting a contingency the baby smiles vigorously. These smiles seem to be caused by discovery of the contingency and to manifest the pleasure that the baby feels at having successfully detected what to do to make a particular event happen. The smiling, in other words, indicates an intellectual pleasure, a pleasure at having discovered something about the causal structure of the world, and pleasure at being in control of some part of the world. . . . I think there is clear evidence that babies do derive great pleasure from problem solving, from intellectual mastery of some bit of their environment, from comprehension of some aspect of the causal structure of the world around them.¹⁹

What a joy to be that creature created in the image of God. Our dominion over the earth through science and technology and our dominion through the arts and humanities is not merely a matter of obedience to God's command in the Garden of Eden to subdue and rule over the earth.²⁰ It is a part of our created identity. It is also, for the believer, a part of our entering into the fullness of our Savior's joy.²¹

Ellen Myers has recently written about the devastating effects of God-rejecting evolutionism/humanism on man's creative activity in the arts and sciences.²² First, God as the foundation of creativity is rejected. Then, the concept of human creativity degenerates as we saw above. Finally, the products of man's creativity are affected. In all areas of art we see a loss of purpose, plot and ethical meaning. In fiction and drama, heroes do not triumph over villains but the central characters are villains, rascals, or authority-rejecting "anti-heroes." In contemporary visual arts, music, and drama we see the promotion of meaninglessness, ugliness, absurdity, despair, profanity, pornography, drugs, the occult, senseless violence, and suicide. Traditional values and institutions are subjected to unceasing satire and ridicule. Even as the craft and technology of modern art forms, especially music and film, have developed to an astounding level, their content and message have sunk lower and lower. In contemporary drama it is an extreme rarity to find any character depicted as having a stable, faithful and wholesome family life. It is virtually impossible to find a fictional family whose members are portrayed as kind, considerate, soft-spoken, and exhibiting simple good manners.

How have we fallen so deeply from the zenith of Western Christian art? It is because our modern society denies that man has been created in the image and likeness of the God of the Bible, and instead sees him as but another

"evolved" animal. Thus his goal is not restoration in God's image and likeness and preparation for eternity with God and Christ. His "recreational needs" which have become his only artistic rationale reject the artistic portrayal of purity, beauty, innocence, heroism, martyrdom, honesty, faithfulness, abiding love, worship and glory. Man reduced to animalism only "needs" what animals need: eating, drinking and merrymaking before death (I Cor.15:32). Thus man the creator dies when he kills God the Creator in his heart and mind.²³

Myers points out that the same decline and corruption of creativity can be expected in the sciences. As she documents, primarily on the basis of the work by science historian Stanley Jaki, modern science owes its existence and flowering to the culturally ingrained faith in the God of the Bible as a "personal orderly, trustworthy Creator and Sustainer."²⁴ To sum up, the scientific meaningfulness of human creativity as well as its products depend on God as the Creator Who made man in His own image and likeness.

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Note: This paper was presented at The Second International Conference on Creationism, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, July 30 - August 4, 1990. It is also contained in the proceedings of that conference (*General Sessions, Vol. 1, 1990, pp. 1-5*) available through Creation Science Fellowship, Inc., 362 Ashland Ave., Pittsburgh, PA. 15228.

MADNESS: MYTH AND REALITY

Ellen Myers

Many Christians are uninformed and confused about madness. Does it really exist, or is it a smoke screen to evade responsibility under God? Is some insanity due to demonic activity? Does at least some madness or insanity have identifiable organic causes? Is mental illness on a continuum with mental health so that no distinction exists in principle between the "sane" and the insane? Does the Bible speak clearly on the issue? In short, what is the myth and what the reality of madness?

The biblically informed Christian does not exclude the real existence of insanity or madness because he knows from Scripture that man is now far removed from his original perfection before the fall due to the ravages of sin. Madness can occur suddenly in later life: King Nebuchadnezzar was insane for seven years when he ate grass like an animal (Daniel 4). There was a real difference between his sane and his insane estate; however, his insanity was due to his pride and disregard of God and hence not "innocent." Scripture also shows that madness can be simulated: when fleeing from Saul, David pretended madness before Achish the king of Gath, scratching on the doors of the gate and letting his spittle fall down on his beard (1 Samuel 21:10-14).

Demons may also cause madness. We know this because Jesus cast out many demons. After He cast the legion of demons out of the wild man among the tombs of Gadara, the man sat at His feet, clothed and "in his right mind" (Mark 5:15, Luke 8:35). This Scripture also shows that there is a real dividing line between the insane and the sane, the mad and the normal. Demonically caused madness may well be initially due to the oppressed person's disobedience to God, as in the case of King Saul (1 Samuel 16:14-23). However, we must be extremely cautious in "diagnosing" demon possession! Dr. Alfred Lechler, an experienced Christian psychiatrist who does not deny demon possession, points out that Jesus clearly distinguished between disease and possession, revealed in the way He dealt with the deaf mute in Mark 7 and the deaf and dumb boy in Mark 9, and in His command to "heal the sick" and "cast out demons" (Matthew 10:1-8). Dr. Lechler rightly adds that "we are duty bound, when dealing with the mentally and emotionally disturbed, to stress the need to differentiate between disease and the demonic."¹

Madness can be caused by willful indulgence in drugs. Though the drug taker is initially responsible for his suffering, the resultant madness is not imaginary or a myth; we deal with real physical changes and disabilities. "Psychoactive drugs" can pierce the brain's barrier designed to block harmful compounds (the handiwork of our loving Creator). They then penetrate to the limbic system deep within the brain which controls our emotions, instincts

essential for survival, and brain areas generating feelings of pleasure. Experts now believe that cocaine, for example, interferes with the normal production and/or functioning of dopamine, an essential neurotransmitter in the brain: "Disturbances in the dopamine supply are involved in serious mental illness such as schizophrenia and in movement disorders such as Parkinson's disease, which results from abnormally low levels of the neurotransmitter."² In insanity due to drug addiction both personal responsibility and physical factors are thus involved, and both must be addressed for lasting relief.

Renowned Christian counselor Jay E. Adams states that prior to the advent of Sigmund Freud and his "medical model" of behavior disorders, " 'mentally ill' persons were viewed as malingerers rather than as patients."³ Was there truth in that historical perception? Adams cites the case of "Steve", diagnosed as a "catatonic schizophrenic," who turned out to have faked all his symptoms to avoid facing his parents with failure in his college studies due to his own neglect.⁴ Dr. Franklin E. Payne, Jr. reports that "Mrs. Jones," a Christian widow in her sixties who was deeply depressed and about to undergo electroshock treatment, overcame her depression simply by resuming her daily responsibilities from which her well-meaning family had sought to relieve her.⁵ Finally, the ability of psychiatrists to diagnose genuine mental illness may well be questioned in view of the famous Rosenhan experiment of 1973. In this experiment David L. Rosenhan, a professor of psychology at Stanford University, had eight sane people apply for admittance to five psychiatric hospitals to try to pass as "mentally ill." They did, and neither psychiatrists nor other staff saw through their deception, though the other, real, patients did. Rosenhan then advised another hospital that he would send them some pseudo-patients, and among 193 patients admitted for treatment 23 were considered suspect by the staff. In fact, all 193 were genuine patients; Rosenhan had sent no pseudo-patients to that hospital at all.⁶ The Rosenhan experiment gave support to those who denied the existence of any psychiatric illness whatever. Nevertheless Christians in the field like Adams and Payne, while adamantly opposed to Freudian approaches and emphasizing the client's own responsibility for his problems under God, are careful to state that there are cases requiring medical treatment.⁷ Modern research involving brain scans of monozygotic twins seems to show beyond doubt that schizophrenia, the most common psychiatric disorder, is indeed physically and genetically based.⁸

Until the nineteenth century the insane roamed the roads and subsisted on alms. Alternately they were confined in prisons or poor houses together with the mentally retarded, criminals, drug and alcohol abusers, physically disabled elderly, mothers with young children, and so on. They might be put in cages, chained to walls, or even exhibited for money. At London's notorious "Bedlam" (its real name was St. Mary's of Bethlehem Hospital) spectators "would jeer at the fenced-off wretches from a distance, provoking them to ever more crazed behavior." Until set free in 1794 by Philippe Pinel, the inmates at the Bicetre Hospital for the insane in Paris "presented

pictures of complete neglect.”⁹

In the United States Dorothea Lynde Dix (1802-1887), a New England school teacher and social reformer, brought about the transfer of the insane to separate state hospitals or asylums in restful countryside settings in the 1840s. Here inmates could work in house-keeping, gardening, food preparation, laundry and the like. The therapeutic value of meaningful work is in full accord with Scripture and has been well established in the treatment of the insane, most recently in successful halfway houses for former asylum inmates established in the 1980s. But all was not well in the asylums. There was lack of staff and overcrowding as the number of inmates grew to a peak of 559,000 in 1955, at which time half of all hospital beds in the United States were occupied by those classified as mentally ill.¹⁰

Until the late 1940s treatment for violent mental patients was essentially limited to physical restraint. It consisted of isolation cells, straitjackets, immersion in freezing water or being packed in wet sheets. After Freud there was also psychotherapy by talk, an essentially useless method as we shall see.

In the late 1930s electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) was introduced. It was effective with chronic patients and in acute episodes of suicidal and aggressive character. Early problems with ECT were gradually overcome, and by the 1970s the one major remaining side effect was permanent spotty memory loss in a significant number of patients. ECT and another radical medical approach, psychosurgery, have fallen into general disfavor largely due to the organized efforts of former mental patients. Psychosurgery was “the first and easiest target of those opposed to all psychiatric treatments” because “The crude early operations had a significant mortality rate” and might indeed produce a “‘vegetable personality’—people who were left without awareness or initiative, and would vegetate on the back wards of hospitals for the rest of their lives.”¹¹ However, Isaac and Armat believe that ECT and psychosurgery are now much more sophisticated, citing testimonies of former patients who greatly benefited from them. They point out that “it has long been known that in its first stages schizophrenia—particularly where there is acute, rapid onset of illness—responds well to ECT.”¹²

ECT has also been beneficial in conjunction with the modern neuroleptic drugs developed after World War II and now the mainstay of psychiatric treatment. Among them are chlorpromazine (Thorazine) for schizophrenia, lithium for manic-depressive illness, antidepressant medication such as amitriptyline, minor tranquilizers such as diazepam to relieve clinical anxiety, and so on. Some medications have severe adverse side effects requiring remedial medication of their own.¹³

The most famous opponent of the “medical model” in psychiatry in the United States is Thomas Szasz, author of the extremely influential *The Myth of Mental Illness*, published in 1961 just as the anti-establishment drug culture was about to get under way. Szasz completely denies the existence of any genuine mental illness whatsoever in the name of full autonomy for one’s choice of lifestyle, a

claim the drug culture rebels fully shared. According to them, "madness" was just a label put on people who would not conform to the "establishment." Norman O. Brown, one of their gurus, expressed their typical stance that madness is actually desirable because it helps us overcome the "reality principle"!¹⁴ Similar to Szasz but less radical is British psychiatrist Garth Wood's very instructive book *The Myth of Neurosis*, published 1983 in England and 1986 in the United States. Its subtitle is, significantly, "Overcoming the Illness Excuse." Wood militates most of all against Freudian psychoanalysis, but also urges a restriction of the field of psychiatry to "genuine psychiatric illnesses," namely, schizophrenia, disorders of mood and emotion, obsessive-compulsive states, and eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa. He offers an excellent layman's guide to the diagnosis and prognosis of these illnesses. He argues that abnormal personality or personality disorder, abnormal personality reactions, psychopathy/sociopathy, hysteria, drug abuse and alcoholism, and sexual dysfunction and deviation are not "true psychological illnesses" and should therefore be excluded from psychiatric treatment.¹⁵ Wood recommends "Moral Therapy" which consists of following the voice of one's conscience and

will seek to show people that in their own interest their goals must never be luxury and ease, but rather activity and difficulty. ... As (the client) begins to see life in a different and more realistic way he will begin to like and admire himself ... because, in the brave confrontation of his problems, he will realize that he is genuinely worthy of self-admiration.¹⁶

A libertarian humanist measuring self-worth by self-effort, Wood believes that "It is then immaterial to Moral Therapy whether or not the individual is a Catholic or a Jew, a Communist or a Humanist, a Protestant or a Buddhist, for as long as he has his own value system his mental health can be secured by the observation of its dictates."¹⁷ Similarly, psychiatrist O. Hobart Mowrer proposed a "Moral Model" of psychiatry, in which a patient's problems are seen as stemming from his own real guilt for past poor behavior and are solved by confession of sin (not biblically defined). The famous "Reality Therapy" of William Glasser parallels Mowrer's work. Certainly these therapies, emphasizing the client's responsibility for overcoming his problems and therefore closer to the biblical Christian perspective, are more successful than Freudian approaches. However, as Adams rightly points out,

neither Mowrer nor Glasser has solved the problem of responsibility. The responsibility they advocate is a relative, changing human responsibility; it is a non-Christian responsibility which must be rejected as fully as the irresponsibility of Freud and Rogers. ... there is no standard apart from God's divinely imposed objective Standard, the Bible.¹⁸

Freudian psychoanalysis has been enormously popular in the United States in mental hospitals and private counseling for the last sixty years. It is heavily preoccupied with hang-ups about sex and consists of lengthy, costly talk sessions about the counselee's past,

dreams and the "subconscious," shifting responsibility and blame for one's problems to others, above all one's mother. As everyone knows, Freudian psychotherapy under various names is still going on today, much of it unfortunately in the name of Christian counseling.¹⁹ This is so despite the fact that already in 1952 H. J. Eysenck of the prestigious British Institute of Psychiatry examined the evidence relating to the actual effects of psychotherapy. He found that people without any treatment at all or with other forms of treatment did at least as well and usually better than people receiving Freudian psychotherapy. Other significant studies have confirmed Eysenck's work.²⁰ At the present time, careful, scientifically controlled research studies are underway seeking to provide evidence as to what types of psychotherapy approaches, if any, are effective and with what specific types of complaints. The goal of such research is to make psychotherapy practitioners publicly accountable along the same lines as physicians in the dispensing of drugs for physical complaints. In general, Freudian related, "mental dynamics" therapies do not fare well under research scrutiny. On the other hand, therapy approaches that emphasize appropriate, personal responsibility, common logic, and problem-solving skills have been shown to work well in helping troubled individuals improve their everyday coping and adjustment.²¹

For the last twenty years "deinstitutionalization" of mental hospital inmates has been the rule. Many thousands of them were pushed out of state mental hospitals into the streets, sidewalks and parks of local communities without any treatment at all. The most trustworthy studies of this situation have found that at least 30 to 40% of America's homeless population of perhaps 4-600,000 are suffering from major genuine mental illnesses (schizophrenia, manic-depressive illness and clinical depression).²² The patients' desperate families are often forced to become their caretakers, mini-asylums and co-victims. They can defend their cohesion, functioning and physical safety only by legally barring the sick family member from the home after he or she actually commits violence against their persons. This victimization of the patients' families is due to the defense of the mad person's "right to refuse treatment." This "right" is preached by the disciples of Szasz, civil libertarians, and heirs of the rebellious 1960s in the name of personal autonomy which over-rides everyone else's right to comfort, safety and life itself. Of course personal autonomy is a travesty when people are unable to function in society on their own due to organically caused mental impairment. After years of cavalierly overriding the welfare of the sane in family and community, civil rights advocates and courts must face the fact that truly insane people exist and may endanger themselves as well as others unless properly restrained and/or medically treated. As psychiatrist Darold Treffert puts it, "what kind of twisted 'right' is it to stab or shoot to death yourself or some innocent bystander while in a psychotic frenzy, directed by terrifying voices from a disordered and disabled mind? ... enough family members have been exhausted in a fruitless effort to help, and enough pa-

tients have 'died with their rights on',"²³

Several conclusions arise from the biblical Christian perspective. First, the diagnosis of organically caused mental disorientation or illness must be well established and then followed up by the best known medical treatment and/or hospitalization, involuntary if violence against self or others is threatened. Second, demon possession behind apparent symptoms of clinical insanity is a real possibility but should not be assumed hastily without prior careful exclusion of organic causes. Third, Freudian psychotherapies are anti-biblical, useless and must be replaced by strictly biblical counseling emphasizing the client's repentance, obedience to and responsibility under God. Fourth, the world as originally created by God and now subject to corruption through man's fall is the only reality there is. The counterculture of the 1960s warred not so much against the "establishment" but more deeply against God Himself and His creation order. Extreme denial of this reality through madness is not an "alternative life style" but a death style. It is a graphic picture of hell where all who worship themselves in would-be "autonomy" will spend eternity unless they repent. This picture of hell includes the mad wretches exhibited for money at Bedlam, the inmates of asylums feigning symptoms of insanity to avoid responsibility for their problems in a normal life, or the untreated insane due to substance abuse now haunting streets, parks and subway stations in our beleaguered communities. Alas, the picture also includes the innocent genuinely, organically mentally ill to whom our neighborly love and care is due just as much as to all innocent sufferers we meet. We must remember that all people, no matter how deeply disintegrated, bear traces of God's own image and likeness in which man was originally created. Furthermore, they also preserve to the last remnants of their God-given created identity or personality. After a discussion of various personality types Wood notes that "when genuine psychiatric illness manifests itself, the previous personality will be reflected in the symptoms."²⁴

Finally, God in His sovereign grace may use both innocent, genuine organic mental illness and also madness and disintegration resulting from willful rebellion against Him and His created reality in conversion and sanctification of the sufferers themselves and those whose lives they touch. So it was with King Nebuchadnezzar. So it was with the madman of Gadara whom Jesus restored to his right mind by exorcising the legion of demons possessing him. Most truly therefore does Eve Lewis Perera speak of madness as a "tool of the New Creation."²⁵ "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Romans 11:36).

Postscript: The following comments were received from Wayne Spencer, a friend and co-worker of the author's, upon reading this article in manuscript form:

Your article addresses a very important issue and I like it. It's not that I have a disagreement with anything you do say, but there are things you don't say that could be clarified.

You address essentially two root causes of "mental ill-

ness"—physiological problems or willful sinful rebellion. I would say there is a third root cause: learned attitudes and behaviors.

Many personal problems are related to upbringing and experience at school and such. They don't excuse the person's sin—but they can make it impossible for them to think or behave better—until they learn that there is something better. Attitudes and actions that are learned can be unlearned, especially in Christ, but many people live for years with various problems or personal sins just because they've learned to. Of course, people, all people, also have a conscience. But the conscience is affected by the learning process and by experience, so it too is fallen.

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3. Jay E. Adams, *Competent to Counsel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1970, Third Printing 1973), p. 4.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-33.
5. Franklin E. Payne, Jr., M.D., *Biblical/Medical Ethics* (Milford, MI: Mott Media, 1985), pp. 156, 161.
6. Rael Jean Isaac and Virginia C. Armat, *Madness in the Streets* (New York: The Free Press, A Division of Macmillan, Inc., 1990), pp. 54-55.
7. Adams exempts "organically generated difficulties" from personal problems people must solve (*Competent to Counsel*, p. 29). Payne reluctantly states that "In some rare instances medication or hospitalization may be necessary. Both the counselor and the counselee should be certain that ... specifically identifiable physical causes have been investigated" (*Biblical/Medical Ethics*, p. 175).
8. Isaac and Armat, *Madness in the Streets*, pp. 164-167.
9. Isaac and Armat, *Madness in the Streets*, p. 1.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 177.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 219.
13. For a brief but very sobering look at some side effects of the neuroleptic drugs, see Isaac and Armat, *Madness in the Streets*, pp. 234-239. This warning is all the more convincing as Isaac and Armat generally welcome and defend these drugs as a great and indispensable advance in the treatment of clinical insanity.
14. See Ellen Myers, "Forerunner of New Age Madness: A Critique of Norman O. Brown" in *Creation Social Science and Humanities Quarterly*, XIII:1 (Fall 1990), pp. 7-16.
15. Garth Wood, *The Myth of Neurosis* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986), pp.34-36; also Appendix I, pp. 214-263.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 158.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 146.
18. Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, xix.
19. Payne warns that the danger of adding worldly concepts to Christian-biblical principles is a danger which "cannot be overemphasized. Most psychiatrists who profess Christianity are a serious hindrance, and even antithetical, to the cause of Christ because of their authoritative, but mistaken, influence in the name of Christ" (Payne, *Medical/Biblical Ethics*, p. 165).
20. Wood, *The Myth of Neurosis*, pp. 275-287. Wood points out that a significant number of patients are made worse by psychotherapy (pp.284-285), and that non-professionals often provide better help for emotionally troubled people than professionals (pp.286-287). Psychotherapy in all its forms is thus essentially worthless.
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23. Isaac and Armat, *Madness in the Streets*, p. 283. Also see *ibid.*, Chapter 12, "The Right to be Crazy" and Chapter 13, "The Specter of Violence," pp. 249-283 for case histories and other extensive documentation.
24. Wood, *The Myth of Neurosis*, p. 44
25. Eve Lewis Perera, "Madness as a Tool of the New Creation," originally published in *Creation Social Science and Humanities Quarterly*, 11:1 (Fall 1979), pp. 5-9, and reprinted nearby in this issue.

MADNESS AS A TOOL OF THE NEW CREATION

Eve Lewis Perera

In beginning this study, I was unsure whether the term "madness" could be used, as I desired, to mean not only frenzy or mania—its most common denotation—but also melancholia or depression. *The Oxford English Dictionary* (1938) gives ancient authority for that double definition:

And this passions ben dyuers madnesse that hyghte
inania (Mania) and madnesse that hyght Malencolia
(Melancholy).

Modern usage does not keep the double meaning, but I intend to do so in this writing.

The condition known as depression must be virtually the same as that known to our forebears as Melancholy. The root meaning of the latter is "black bile;" its association with the medieval "four humors" is doubtless one reason why a generation more sophisticated in physiology has discarded it. But "choler" or bile by extension means "anger." The root meanings of "melancholy" are still singularly appropriate for depression: as their days wear on in sullen non-cooperation, depressives are told by mental health professionals that they are filled with unexpressed anger. The mood is "black" because the feelings are in darkness, concealed, as opposed to "red anger" or rage in someone who tends to violence. We think we know more about human motivations than the ancients did, but I wonder. With all their inexpertise in physiology, they understood matters of thought and will better than most moderns.

Because it is so passive, our contemporaries commonly see depression as not being a matter of choice or will at all. One is simply a victim, and much more to be pitied—however annoying at times—than the "high," frenzied, maniacal or violent person who indulges in "acting out."

Seen in relation to the will, however, both disorders must be "madness"—not "mental illness" which one catches somehow, but "mental disorder;" disordered thinking and feeling that result from a series of choices. Modern popularizers, such as Phyllis Chesler in *Women and Madness*, blame the "system" or certain groups for an individual's madness. I submit, however, that except for certain inherited conditions, the "victim's" own will was involved in the genesis of the disorder and must be involved in its cure. Furthermore, the disease symptoms themselves can be seen as part of the cure, the visible festering of a boil that has all along harbored intolerable poisons but now commands a painful lancing.

As someone who experienced both mania and melancholia some years ago and has grown to perceive them as God's instru-

ments in healing and taming a wounded and rebellious will, I am interested to explore the possibility that madness is a kind of "unmaking" to which God our Maker occasionally resorts. The person's mind, losing its habitual order, becomes like the unshaped matter that was God's first step in creation: "and the earth was without form and void." So resistant has it been (for reasons both voluntary and involuntary) to acquiring the "mind of Christ" that God must in mercy temporarily remove all competence from it.

The personality is like an eccentric pot, removed from the wheel to be banged into shapelessness, and then shaped again, this time well-centered and "true." Some pots thus unshaped, it would appear, are not given that second chance on the wheel, but become history's sad warnings, fuel for such sayings as "whom the Gods would destroy they first make mad" (Longfellow). So Nietzsche, his productive years filled with brilliant blasphemies, ended his days in futile syphilitic madness.

The poet Gerard Manley Hopkins was born in the same year as Nietzsche, 1844. He too experienced madness, in the form of paralyzing depression and dread, and has described them with searing power. But as a believing Christian, Hopkins saw his emotional struggles as part of God's shaping and purifying work in him. He too saw the mind's pain and confusion as God's "unmaking":

Thou hast bound bones and veins in me, fastened me
flesh,

And after it almost unmade, what with dread,
Thy doing ... (*The Wreck of the Deutschland*, 5-7)

He does not cheapen emotional pain into a formula, as do many who have never experienced it:

O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap
May who ne'er hung there. ("No worst," 9-11)

In the midst of his pain he proclaims its purpose; because he is never "unmade" enough to despair: "Why? That my chaff might fly; my grain lie, sheer and clear." (*Carrion Comfort*, 9) Trapped in a lump of ruined self-righteousness, he knows that the divine purpose marks the only real difference between a downcast believer and any other depressed person:

Selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours. I see
The lost are like this, and their scourge to be
As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse.
("I wake and Feel ...," 12-14)

As a high school and college student, this writer discovered and delighted in Hopkins's early sonnets celebrating the natural Creation, but shunned the "Terrible Sonnets" in horror.

Now they have become very precious, as has the knowledge that Hopkins's last words (he died of typhoid at the age of 45) were "I am so happy—I am so happy—I am so happy."

For some who long for righteousness, then, madness can be a crisis in which the individual learns to apprehend and to obey God in a way never before suspected. One hesitates to call a bout of sick unreason either necessary or desirable; our self-respect would prefer

that, if suffer we must, the means of suffering be more physical, less demeaning. In my own experience, however, that self-respect was part of the very stiff pride of one who, having long felt unloved and rejected, had determined her own (chiefly intellectual) efforts to earn love and acceptance. Self-effort toward righteousness or worthiness is never God's way for us (it doesn't even work); and he must use whatever means necessary to let us know this. Because my mind was my most cherished faculty, I particularly dreaded madness and despised any hint of it in others. But it was madness that God chose to teach me at last to "tremble at his word" (see Isaiah 66:2).

I thought at the time of a Dylan Thomas title, *Disorder and Early Sorrow*, perhaps because my mind needed to experience disorder while its "early sorrow" was being healed. I also thought of what Job had said: "The thing I greatly feared is come upon me" (Job 3:25, KJV).

Job, whose woes were physical at the outset, also came to know "anguish of spirit," "bitterness of soul" (Job 7:11, NIV). Even his bed, the place to which anguished spirits retreat in vain, was no comfort, bringing him the terrifying dreams and visions (or "hallucinations") that mental patients know so well.

When I think my bed will comfort me
And my couch will ease my complaint,
Even then you frighten me with dreams
And terrify me with visions. (Job 7:13-14, NIV)

Job sees what has happened to him as an unmaking, like that of a potter:

Your hands shaped and made me—
Will you now turn and destroy me?
Remember that you molded me like clay;
Will you now turn me to dust again? (Job 10:8-9)

Job's trials started at the instigation of Satan, the "accuser of the brethren," who was certain that this man's faithfulness to God was based only on the material comfort he has received. It strikes me that, through one means or another, this accuser makes such a challenge in the life of every believer. He tries to prove to God that His people prefer to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil—deciding what is "good" to do (today's criterion is "If it feels good, do it"), doing it, and expecting a reward—in preference to the tree of life, or a living and deliberate dependence upon God for righteousness and for sustenance, no matter what the consequences.

At first Job's righteousness—doing all the "right" things, dealing honestly in trade, sacrificing on behalf of his children, could just as well have been following a list of spiritual do's and don'ts (a popular habit among "churchy" people), which is in effect "eating from the tree of knowledge." But as his prosperity, his health, his very reason were undone, he reached a place of desolation in which God could speak to him, and from which he could know God's sovereignty and righteousness in his inmost being, rather than just because he had been taught facts about God.

My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you;
Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes

(42:5-6).

Job's "later end was blessed more than his beginning," but those physical blessings were merely a surface sign of the newly blessed attitude he had been given at such terrible cost. In our pride, some of us are so convinced that we ourselves can be righteous that we are not surprised when our almsgiving is visible and appreciated by all; secretly, though, we hate ourselves for not measuring up to that of which we believe ourselves capable. God then sometimes uses unreason or disorder to build in us his own reason. When at last we "despise ourselves" and repent, he can show us how unconditional is his love for us. We have wanted the love of others to be based on our success, our form or comeliness; but we must all come to the place at which the Lord Jesus was most precious to the Father: when, marred past recognition by his execution, "he hath no form or comeliness" (Isaiah 53:2).

Pre-eminent among scriptural examples of madness is King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Daniel 1-4). When Daniel interpreted for him his dream of the great statue of gold, silver, bronze, and iron mixed with clay, the king acknowledged that the God of Israel was a "revealer of mysteries," a source of knowledge. Then, however, he set up a statue of himself all of gold. Apart from its prophetic application to historical kingdoms, this story shows what men everywhere do when possessed of a little knowledge (even if that knowledge comes from God) so long as they persist in thinking of themselves as righteous. God makes them aware of a self that, because he created it, contains some gold along with baser metals and clay. But they take the knowledge and use it for their own glory, fashioning an image or public personality—made of pure gold, all sin or imperfection denied or excused—that others are to worship.

Perhaps that *public idol of the self* is the most important "graven image" we are commanded not to make, in this age when few of us worship statues. That public self is the creation of human artifice. The stone of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, on the other hand, like the unhewn altar stones of early Old Testament days, has never known the touch of human artifice. It is just as God gave it, the Rock of our salvation, and it destroys any idol, however complex. Similarly, it is only the unadorned personality that God shapes in us that we need share with others. If we will not let our "yea be yea, and nay be nay," we are busily justifying and embroidering ourselves so as to be admired.

When Nebuchadnezzar asked the populace to worship the statue, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused:

O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up. (Daniel 3:16-18)

That is the attitude the godly man can take toward all "public images," whether his own or another's. He does not need to defend himself. Because God is his protector, he is not afraid to refuse

worship to other's idols of themselves.

Nebuchadnezzar was livid at the refusal, as have been many whose self-idolatrous pretensions were exposed by the Lord Jesus. But the three young men were rescued from the flames into which he had them thrown. The king was filled with admiration, and passed a decree that anyone speaking against the Hebrews' God would be cut to pieces and his house reduced to rubble.

He still had not understood God's sovereign claim on his own life, or the intolerable nature of his pride. So God used madness for his humbling. This king more glorious than all his fellows was made to live out in the rains like an animal, his sanity gone and his hair and nails growing without check. He had been warned about this in a dream interpreted by Daniel, but his pride and boasting in his own magnificence had continued despite the warning. After the humiliating, terrifying period of madness, however, Nebuchadnezzar said for the first time: "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble." (4:37, NIV)

The above insights have some echoes in contemporary psychiatry. Dr. Theodore Isaac Rubin, author of the book that was made into the award-winning film "David and Lisa," regards a nervous collapse as a "cleansing temper tantrum," entirely beneficial if it is allowed to do its work thoroughly. "A nervous breakup," he said, "consists of a breakup of a tenuous neurotic structure designed to hold a lot of half truths about oneself in place."² Dr. Karl Menninger, in *The Vital Balance*, talks about people's being "weller than well"—achieving at a peak of effectiveness—after a mental collapse or depression and recovery.

Informal conversations several years apart with two staff psychiatrists at the Austen Riggs Center, Stockbridge, Mass., suggest that certain of their colleagues would share the view that a "nervous breakdown" can have constructive effects, even though such an event is always more to be prevented than sought. Unfortunately, very few psychiatrists are willing to draw on divine resources during a patient's "reconstruction." As a result, the healing repentance takes in only certain attitudes, not the entire life.

Those psychiatrists who respect the supernatural, like the late Dr. Carl Jung, or a writer-psychologist like Dr. Phillip Slater (*The Wayward Gate*), give it such an undiscriminating welcome that there is great danger that occultism may obscure the things of God. This is terrifyingly ironic, for as "occult" means "dark" or "hidden," some past contact with occult forces (drugs, Ouija boards, yoga or TM, even in my case a childhood "pirate vow") has nearly always played a role in the development of mental darkness or madness, solidifying the will's resistance to retraining.

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BOOK REVIEW

Darold A. Treffert, M.D., *Extraordinary People: Understanding Savant Syndrome*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1989, First Ballantine Books Edition March 1990. Paperback, 358 pp. incl. Bibliography and Index. \$4.95.

A psychiatrist consulted in the making of the academy award winning movie *The Rain Man* in which Dustin Hoffman played the role of an autistic savant, Dr. Treffert is currently director of a mental health center and in private practice in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. He has done research on Savant Syndrome and worked with savants for twenty-six years.

What is "savant syndrome" and who are "savants"? Dr. Treffert gives the following definitions:

Savant Syndrome is a condition in which persons with major mental illness or major intellectual handicap have spectacular islands of ability and brilliance ... In some savants ... the skills are remarkable simply in contrast to the handicap, but in other, more rare savants ... the abilities and skills would be remarkable even if viewed in normal persons (p.3).

Here are two famous "savants": (1) Leslie Lemke is blind, severely mentally handicapped, has cerebral palsy and no formal musical training whatever, yet he can play any piece of music back flawlessly after hearing it only once. He has traveled the world on concert tours, first with his adoptive mother May and then her daughter Mary. His repertoire of thousands of pieces includes "Rhapsody in Blue" or Tchaikovsky's "Piano Concerto No.1." Leslie retains music in his memory forever. May Lemke has ascribed his astonishing accomplishments to our Lord in answer to prayer; a film made of them is called "May's Miracle." (2) Alonzo Clemons had a brain injury at age 3 which left him with poorly developed speech and an I.Q. of about 40. Along with his retardation he has a prodigious ability to sculpt: "In a single sitting of one hour he can produce, for example, a horse, a gorilla and a wildebeest. ... He remembers what he has seen only once and uses the picture in his mind as a model ... he can sculpt in the dark ... (he) has never had an art lesson" (p. 157). When his parents began to visit the zoo with him so he could see the animals in real life a remarkable improvement marked his work, which is exhibited worldwide. On the 1985 The Morning Show Alonzo sculpted an elephant in 30 minutes before a live TV audience. Treffert reports that

The audience was awestruck when he also showed them the horse and colt he had completed in the twenty minutes he waited in the green room for the show to begin.

"Where does that talent come from, Alonzo?" asked Regis, one of the hosts of the show.

"God gave me a gift," replied Alonzo.

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Vol. XIII, No. 4 (Summer 1991)

"He's got such a lovely countenance. Is he always that sweet-natured?" asked someone from the audience.

"Yes he is, he's so sweet and loving," replied his mother. "He's one of the happiest people I've ever met," concluded Regis.

I agree. (p.159)

Many savants can do amazing mathematical feats or can remember entire books, dates from remote history, city directories and the like. Some 10 per cent of patients with early infantile autism, itself occurring only in 7 cases per 100,000 children, are savants. In general, only one out of every 2,000 institutionalized developmentally disabled people is a savant. Prodigious savants, like Leslie Lemke or Alonzo Clemons, "are extremely rare—less than 100 cases have been reported in all world literature on this topic during the past 100 years" (p.16). On the other hand, the condition has been reported for hundreds of years and probably existed from time immemorial.

Treffert investigates possible explanations of this remarkable condition. For instance, some have speculated that "eidetic imagery" is the key. "Eidetic imagery" may mean a rare and very specific memory function in which, after one has viewed an object or a scene, an intensely strong visual image persists in the mind for some time after the object or scene is withdrawn. Alternately, "eidetic imagery" is used for "the ability to scan quickly and store, for later recall, vast amounts of extremely detailed and minute information. Popularly referred to as 'photographic memory,' this ability ... is also rare" (p.165). After discussing a number of studies, Treffert concludes that "eidetic imagery cannot be a universal explanation for savant skills because such skills ... have been reported in blind individuals where eidetic imagery is not possible" (p.169). Another explanation offered for savant syndrome is genetics, plausible in view of the hereditary basis of some mental retardation as well as of special abilities such as for music and art. However, Treffert shows that genetics is not a universal explanation of the savant any more than eidetic imagery. He is right when he states already early on that "The significance of Savant Syndrome lies in our inability to explain it ... no model of brain function, particularly memory, will be complete until it can include and account for this remarkable condition" (p. 3).

This is a lively, warm, totally fascinating book which widens our horizon and alerts the Christian believer to God's unfathomable handiwork in the creation of man. How marvelous that among the developmentally disabled, the blind, the stammerers, the "idiots" despised by society there arise "savants" defying merely scientific explanation. The remnants of astounding mental and artistic ability in these people, human beings like ourselves despite their severe handicaps, clearly bear out the biblical account of man's original creation in the image and likeness of God (Romans 1:20), Whose knowledge, ability and wisdom are infinite. Highly recommended.

—Reviewed by Ellen Myers

WHY AM I HERE?

Troy Wittren

When I was born twenty-five years ago, everyone thought I was normal. It took me longer to learn how to crawl, but my mother assumed it was just due to ordinary developmental differences between babies. But when I was eight months old, the doctors diagnosed me as having cerebral palsy. They said I might not ever be able to walk or talk, or feed or clothe myself.

A friend of my parents suggested they put me in a special home and not have to deal with me. The suggestion shocked them, for the thought had never crossed their minds; just because I happened to have cerebral palsy didn't mean they loved me any less. In their eyes, I wasn't a piece of faulty machinery to be left in some human scrap heap—I was their baby boy.

It wasn't until I was three that I began to walk. I was able to speak, too, but not very clearly. At that early age I began going to Holladay Center, a school in Portland for the physically handicapped.

In physical therapy I learned how to go up and down stairs with and without a rail, and how to pick myself up off the floor without any props to help me. In occupational therapy I learned how to dress myself, how to get more food in me than on the table and floor, how to hold a pencil and how to type. And in speech therapy I learned how to better control my breathing and how to pronounce my S's, C's and T's.

I was "mainstreamed" into the public school system in the fifth grade. Looking back, one thing that really bothers me about the education I received in the public schools is that it lacked any real sense of human value. In the sixth grade we studied "values clarification:" A boat is sinking with six people aboard. There is a lifeboat that can hold three people. Which three people do you let into the boat? Which three would be more "valuable" or "useful" to society if they survived? I always hated the lifeboat idea, mainly because I would probably be one of the first to be sent overboard.

In junior high I learned about sex and condoms, that if you don't play around right, you might get caught. I also learned that we are all just products of evolutionary chance.

But during my sophomore year of high school, I began questioning the meaning of life, not just my own, but all life. What are we all here for? Is all we can do to just try to get rich and be loved, then pass on? I figured that my handicap exempted me from both of these possibilities. What could life hold for me? According to what I learned in school, the only reason for living was a resolute self-will. I was tired of the fight; I had no self-will left.

God. Where was He? The simple prayers of my youth made little sense to me anymore. Science had answers for everything, or so I

CSSH Quarterly
Vol. XIII, No. 4 (Summer 1991)

thought. I didn't believe in Santa Claus any more, why did I have to believe in God? I became frustrated with my life, seeing little meaning in it. I was crying out to God, with my spirit if not with my mouth.

That summer I was fortunate enough to get into the Youth Conservation Corps, a federal program for youths aged 15 to 18. We did odd jobs for the Forest Service, such as clearing brush from campgrounds and building barbed wire fences on range lands. I met and became good friends with (in my very unbiased opinion) the prettiest girl in the camp. She listened to me as I described all that I had been through. She really cared about me as a person. After nine years, she still does. It's not a romantic relationship that we have; it's something much deeper, something spiritual.

A year after that camp, my friend began her journey with Jesus. She was very athletic and the valedictorian in her high school class. So accomplished, beautiful and popular, I didn't know why she needed God—but I did know that, if He was real, I needed Him even more than she. I began searching.

A cousin of mine from California was up visiting. ... I remember he asked me how much of all the knowledge in the universe, even just the world, that man had accumulated. I was bright enough to know that though man has accumulated a vast amount of data on the happenings in this world, it is a minuscule percentage of everything there is to know. He asked simply, "Doesn't that leave room for God?"

As I began reading the Scriptures, I came to realize that man is not just another beast roaming the earth, relatives to the ape, as the public schools had led me to believe. Man is the supreme creation of God.

I asked the youth pastor at the nearby church many questions pertaining to the Scriptures. One of the big questions I had was still "Why?" This time I was not asking the question out of despair. It was a question of why, with all our evil ways, does God put up with us? God would have plenty of good reason to do away with the entire human race if He had the mind to. Rather, He chose to love us and redeem us. Why?

What the youth pastor's exact answer was I don't remember, but it was something to the effect that "God made us for His good pleasure." A simple answer, yet profound. Scripture says: "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness' ... " (Genesis 1:26). God chose to create man, He chooses to love and redeem us because He wants to. God does just what He wants; nobody tells God what to do!

When I realized that my value as a person was not tied up in measuring up to the standards of others, but rather in doing God's will for me, I felt like a new person. No more was I just a crippled human being, I was a child of God with a purpose. That excited me.

Unfortunately, society has lost that sense of divine purpose for man. Many people love only themselves and are living only for the pleasures they can get out of this world. Others are concerned about preserving certain parts of God's marvelous creation, but

when it comes to saving man himself, the centerpiece of God's creation, they cringe.

Human life is now treated as merely a disposable commodity. If a woman conceives and she doesn't want a baby, she can just abort the "fetus" without troubling about doing away with a human life created by God. Physically handicapped babies, mentally retarded babies, babies that nobody wants—if they are no more than the mechanical by-products of human sex, why should we allow for a lifetime of suffering when we can end life even as it begins?

Sure, I suffer. Would I still be human if I didn't? Some days it's hard for me to get up. Yes, it has turned out that I can walk, clothe myself and feed myself. I have my own car and can get around quite well. I have a college degree and a fancy portfolio of articles to show people. But still, to many kids I am just another "retarded" guy to laugh at. To many adults, I am somebody to talk down to or to ignore altogether. To potential employers, I am too much of a risk.

But all of us suffer at certain times in our life. ... It's just part of the human reality that we need to accept as part of God's plan for us, as a way of coming to know Him, and His own sufferings, better. ...

The real value of human life comes from God. In the words of St. Paul: "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands ... since He gives to all life and breath and all things" (Acts 17:24-25).

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THE WORLD OF BECKY MYERS

Ellen Myers

My daughter Becky, 19, has Downs' Syndrome and an I.Q. of around 40. She attends the special education program for "Trainable Mentally Handicapped" in the Wichita, Kansas public school district. A few days ago I met with the principal, teachers, workshop supervisor, social worker, psychologist and nurse of Becky's school (the so-called "I.E.P." conference) to determine her placement during the next three years.

All who deal with Becky agree that she has an outstanding sense of neatness. In her room, her clothes closet and dressers, her school locker, desk and workshop place everything is always in perfect order. She thrives on a fixed activity schedule: Monday evening her hair is washed, Tuesday and Friday is bath time, Wednesday is "church night" complete with children's choir (Becky is an enthusiastic and good singer). Thursday Mother fixes fish, Friday we have our spaghetti dinner, Saturday morning means watching children's cartoons on TV and lunch of Mexican food (always in the same restaurant). Sunday, of course, means Sunday School and church, and usually lunch at "MackyDonald's." Saturday and Sunday Mother fixes special breakfasts for Becky: two poached eggs with orange juice, toast and jam on Saturday, waffles on Sunday. It is fun to share Becky's undisguised joy in good, God-given, tasty food, and she never neglects to say grace before meals.

Becky loves to watch the same video programs time after time in weekly rotation. She prefers action stories with a clear plot, true heroes and villains (the favorite: the old musical "Oliver!" with Ron Moody as Fagin). She likes to have Mother right there with her doing some kind of needlework, but will graciously assent to Mother's having to do other work or talking to visitors if needed. How easy-going Becky is in her daily life with others, right along with her insistence upon regular schedule and personal order and cleanliness! Becky also has a happy sense of humor, as her school psychologist discovered; they have taken to greeting each other by "wrong" names as their own private joke.

Becky does very well in the workshop, bringing home excellent report cards and notes every day. She is diligent in classroom activities as well, wanting to keep constructively busy at all times. At home Becky sorts out and puts away all the laundry. She helps with dusting, vacuuming, fixing of simple meals, setting and clearing the table, and gardening. She takes care of all her personal grooming very nicely, except for hair washing and styling.

Because Becky has a large family right in town and regular fellowship in a large local church, she enjoys plenty of interaction with other people. She has attended school with most of her classmates ever since kindergarten, and every client in her workshop is

handicapped like she. The people at our church are exceptionally warm and open, constantly show love and concern for each other and, praise God, have the right priorities in unconditionally accepting the handicapped. How they love Becky, and she them! Even at the Special Olympics, the only competitive event Becky takes part in, the tension of normal people in competition against each other is absent because the athletes are too "stupid" to be upset when someone else takes first place.

All this makes for a totally familiar, sheltered and loving world where everyone is friendly and no one presents a threat. Although this is true for all the children and workers in the program, everyone at the conference agreed that Becky is especially outgoing, cheerful and loving towards all people she meets. Our one fear for our guileless affectionate Becky is that she might become the innocent victim of a stranger with lust or violence in his heart. She has never met such a one and cannot comprehend our "normal" sin. She will never understand the villains in her videos: why does Bill Sykes in "Oliver!" murder kind Nancy who loves him so devotedly and selflessly? The only "solution" we can think of is to warn Becky against all strangers and to keep her supervised and sheltered at all times. This is the closest shadow of man's fallenness and sin over her life. Because she is surrounded by so many loving relatives and friends, she is hardly if at all aware of always living in "protective custody."

Finally, Becky dearly and totally loves and trusts Jesus. Recently she fell down the front steps of our house and broke her ankle, a compound, painful fracture needing an operation, four days in the hospital, two months in a cast and weeks of physical therapy. Through it all not one word of self-pity or blame against God or man came from Becky's lips; instead, much prayer and constant thankfulness for God, doctor, nurses and therapists. She cried only a few times during the first few days when the acute pain became too great. There was one day, shortly after release from the hospital, when a huge poster arrived from her friends at her school and workshop and was fixed to the wall by her bed. That evening Becky suddenly said in awe, "I will walk again—I will see my friends again," and then wept convulsively for some minutes in Mother's arms. She had thought she would never walk again and never see her friends again after the accident! Then came tearful yet joyful prayer of thanks to Jesus for being with her and healing her. Her thanks and love spilled over to doctor, nurses and therapists. In the end everyone in the clinic looked forward to her visits. Truly Becky "walks worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, ... strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy" (Colossians 1:10-11). Her patience and bravery through it all were exemplary.

Becky was called to sit in at the school conference, and she kept looking at Mother to see her reaction to what was said about herself. In the end, when Mother turned to Becky to tell her from a heart overflowing with thanks: "Becky, Mother is very happy with you!" Becky beamed with joy too great for words. Even so it will be with us when our Heavenly Father can tell us, "Well done, good and

faithful servant! Enter into the joy of your Lord" (Matthew 25:21,23). Among Becky's gifts from God are cheerfulness, neatness, a sense of beauty, humor and discipline, perseverance, fine motor coordination in mechanical tasks, courage, patience, and joyfulness in trouble. God gave her good people to teach her, befriend her and bring out the best in her. (How we thank Him for her Sunday School and children's group teachers at church, and for the beloved friends who shopped for weeks to find a "Light Brite" toy they knew she loved!) God blessed her mother with acceptance and love for her. Becky for her part has given her Lord abundant increase and is His blessing and reward to all who know her.

This is the world God her Creator made for Becky. It is a sheltered world in the midst of loving and beloved people. It is a world of blessed simplicity and humility, where the life of Christ abounds in Becky herself in sickness as in health. It is a peaceful, orderly and joyful world of living moment by moment in surrender to God's will, for Becky is incapable of planning her own future or even the next day. And so are we, if we but realized it! Would that we too could practice, as does Becky by God's design, the blessed way of Christ which "opens step by step before us" (Proverbs 4:12, literal translation from the Hebrew). The danger is the evil in the hearts of sinful "strangers," to which Becky, thank God, can hardly if at all give "informed consent," for the original sin in her heart is almost entirely disabled by her "handicap" in God's good will. Her world would be totally good and safe without the possibility of evil contact from the "outside." And, yes, there is the possibility of accidents, pain and sickness, but family, friends, fellow believers, and medical personnel stand by to help, and have helped.

In Becky's joyful, childlike simplicity, humility and love we see a picture of what we all should be spiritually, in Christ. Her world is not like the world at large, nor is it the world of every mentally handicapped person. Nevertheless it does really exist in its unique love, joy, harmony and goodness. As such it points to the eternal home intended by God for us men. That eternal home is like Becky's world yet incomparably better, for "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him" (I Corinthians 2:9). We who belong to Him now will live there forever with our Creator and adoptive Father in each other's love made perfect in Christ's holiness. In that world there will be no more sickness or pain, abolished along with sin and all its effects. The goal of God's original creation is just this. We cannot guarantee that Becky's world here and now will be safe from the lust and violence of evil strangers exploiting her innocent love. From God's eternal, restored and perfected Paradise, however, all evil "strangers" will be banished forever.

Note: For earlier lessons learned from and through her daughter in the past, see Ellen Myers' articles "The Mentally Retarded—The Least of Our Brethren" and "Special Education Lessons from the Biblical Creation Perspective" in *CSSH Quarterly*, Vol. VII, No. 1 (Fall 1984).

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DEVOTIONAL

John Mackay 1

ANNOUNCEMENTS 2

HUMAN CREATIVITY:
EVOLUTION OR BIBLICAL CREATION?

Paul D. Ackerman 4

MADNESS: MYTH AND REALITY

Ellen Myers 12

MADNESS AS A TOOL OF THE NEW CREATION

Eve Lewis Perera 20

BOOK REVIEW

Darold A. Treffert, M.D.: *Extraordinary People:
Understanding Savant Syndrome* 25

WHY AM I HERE?

Troy Wittren 27

THE WORLD OF BECKY MYERS

Ellen Myers 30

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